



Aruba bids “T’oro” to Rabbi Marcelo Bater

The Jewish community of Aruba held a farewell get together for Rabbi Marcelo Bater at the Temple Beth Israel in Oranjestad this past Sunday. Rabbi Bater, who came to Aruba four years ago, fresh from Rabbinical College in Jerusalem, had become an integral part of the small community of Aruba. During the gathering at the synagogue on Sunday afternoon, temple members freely expressed their regard for him and his family and regrets at his departure. Originally from Argentina, the Rabbi and his wife Sonya will return there for a few months before he assumes spiritual leadership of his new congregation in Plantation, Florida.

During his tenure in Aruba, Rabbi Bater and his wife shared a number of life’s landmark moments with temple members, including the birth of their first child, Gali. From the beginning, the Rabbi was always mindful of bringing his small congregation together and involving them in the life of the Jewish and Aruban community, and instigated many events to accomplish this goal.

Aside from regular Sabbath services, Rabbi Bater planned various pastimes that stimulated the Jewish community and helped them to understand their faith while reconciling the precepts of an ancient religion with modern times. The monthly Sunday morning coffee klatches that were held at various cafes around the island not only brought together temple members and guests for breakfast, but also stimulating debate on various issues of religious ethics and law.

A number of temple members thoroughly enjoyed his weekly classes regarding Torah, and the final Friday of each month brought many to Temple Beth Israel to share Shabbos dinner together, another innovation of Rabbi Bater. During his tenure, he saw to the conversion to Judaism of four of island residents, who were welcomed to the faith and community. Before his departure, he was seeing to the instruction of two more.

Regarding his departure, Rabbi Bater expresses his love for all his Aruban friends, and his regrets at leaving. A lack of young Jewish children to be companions to his daughter and a soon to arrive second child motivated him to join with a much larger community, so that his children could have “a true Jewish upbringing.”

“Being a Rabbi to not only the regular members, but visiting tourists, and being something of a tour guide made my work very different and interesting,” reports Rabbi Bater, Temple Beth Israel is a tourist attraction with island guest continually stopping by to find out about the local community. It made them very happy to find we had a synagogue and an active community. This is an unusual task for a Rabbi, and It certainly was a challenge, but I found it very rewarding.”

During his farewell party, instead of speeches, Rabbi Bater played a nostalgic slideshow that chronicled the many wonderful memories and moments he has shared with his congregants from the moment he and Sonya first arrived in Aruba. The gathering showered him and his family with gifts that will remind them of their time on the island for years to come, and all shared that sentiment that he would always be welcome here, and temple members and the Rabbi were not saying “goodbye” but simply “T’oro.”